

Changeable Hawk-eagle *Nisaetus linnaeetus* and Crested Hawk-eagle *Nisaetus cirrhatus*. Please note that the earlier generic name of hawk-eagles was *Spizaetus*. The other species illustrated on Plate 46 is that of Mountain Hawk-eagle, now in two forms: the nominate *Nisaetus nipalensis* of northern India, and *Nisaetus kelaarti* or Legge's Hawk-eagle of southern Western Ghats, which is a smaller bird. Other plates in the new edition are also less cluttered.

Almost all the plates have been re-composed, so now there are not more than 5-6 species per plate (including various postures, age and sex-related differences if any). As the authors write in the Introduction "many species and even a few families or groups have been repainted for this edition. Species texts have been significantly increased for almost all species, and the maps have been completely revised."

I must admit that although the maps have been considerably improved in the second edition, there are still many twists and turns, and enigmatic gaps in the polygons to make one comfortable. With extremely limited data of such a large number of birds in such a large and diverse country, producing good distribution maps of Indian birds is a real challenge. Additionally, we have destruction of forests and grasslands (destroying habitat of some species, while increasing habitats of others), destruction of natural wetlands and creation of artificial waterbodies, due to dams, reservoirs and canals, unpredictable weather and climate change – all of which are changing the distribution pattern of many peripatetic species. New information is not reflected on maps based on old museum records and published papers. Increasing popularity of bird watching in India and use of

internet, facebook and twitter to report sightings has increased the scope of recording. A good photograph has now replaced specimen collection. What we urgently need is to publish distribution atlas of the birds of India. Till this is done, most of our field guides will have confusing distribution maps.

A total of 1,313 species have been described in the Indian subcontinent. Adding the number of potential splits as full species, this book describes 1,375 species – formidable task indeed. Printing and other production quality is top class. Earlier POCKET GUIDE had numbers below the illustrations while in this book, species names have been given, which further enhance the quality and usefulness of the book. I wish Peterson's patented arrow marks can be 'unpatented' so we all can use them in illustrated guides as a quick pointer to the characteristic features to look for in the field before a confusing green-pigeon or a *Phylloscopus* warbler flies away. In the bird rich forests of India, we all have cursed ourselves for missing the clinching characteristic feature – for instance noting everything except one feature that separates the Chestnut-crowned Bush-warbler *Cettia major* from the Aberrant Bush-warbler *Cettia flavirostris*.

For 14 long years, the POCKET GUIDE (1999) was my field companion (along with Pamela's book from 2005) even when it was tattered and the book was held in place with a rubber band! Getting hold of this marvelous book is an un-describable pleasure, at home and in the field. At least for some years, I will not have to use a rubber band to keep the pages in place. I am sure before my second edition reaches that stage the third edition, with improved maps, will be in the market.

■ ASAD R. RAHMANI

2. TOWARDS CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF MANGROVE ECOSYSTEMS IN INDIA, 2011. Edited by J.R. Bhatt, D.J. Macintosh, T.S. Nayar, C.N. Pandey, B.P. Nilaratna. Mangroves for the Future (MFF) India & IUCN, India. Size: 25.5 cm x 17 cm, 280 pp. Hardbound. Price not mentioned.

Viewed in the not-so-distant past as hostile swamps, mangroves are recently looked upon by most people as wetlands worth conserving, being both a valuable ecological and economic resource. Nevertheless, despite this change in perception mangrove destruction continues unabated even today at alarming rate, the major threats being urban development, aquaculture and over-exploitation of fishery resources.

A number of books and reviews on mangroves are available. In fact, even a superficial survey of the current scientific literature indicates that research on systematics and ecology of mangrove ecosystems is steaming ahead at a rapid pace. Most of this literature deals with various aspects of biology, structure and functions of mangrove forests covering

systematics, floristics, community structure, species diversity, species composition across salinity and soil types. While such a flow of information is extremely important to understand mangrove forests, a timely account on the information gaps, reviews on site-specific conservation activities and actual implementation of various research outputs in mangrove conservation is a need.

With this background, a two-day workshop on 'Conservation and Management of Mangrove Ecosystems in India – Stakeholder Consultation for Assessment of Training and Capacity Building Needs and Design of National Strategy and Action Plan' was held in February 2008 at GEER Foundation, Gandhinagar, Gujarat. The delegation included a wide range of audiences from the government to NGOs,

stakeholders to fieldworkers representing countries, such as India and Sri Lanka. This book is the proceedings of this workshop with papers through twenty-two chapters, a picture stitched out of various case studies depicting the current state of mangroves in India.

The first chapter is a comprehensive account on the 'biodiversity of mangrove ecosystems in India' which outlines the current status of our knowledge and highlights gaps that need to be addressed for better conservation and management. The succeeding chapters deal with topics as diverse as reviews on overall mangrove species diversity in India, site-specific accounts of species diversity, flora-fauna interaction studies, coastal management in India, as well as specific case studies, including experiments and success stories, use of technologies in management (such as information technology, remote sensing, etc.). Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal (Sundarbans), Andaman and Nicobar, Karnataka and Kerala are the well-represented states among these chapters with various aspects of conservation. Absence of representation of Maharashtra in spite of its vast mangrove cover is unfortunate.

The book concludes with a page summary record of the workshop proceedings and recommendations. These recommendations emphasize mainly on capacity building among various target groups, including local communities, forest officials, researchers with respect to identification of health and habitat quality indicators, bio-prospecting mangrove resources, etc. The inter-institutional collaborations, development of databases, actual economic evaluation are some of the important key factors identified for strategic management of these ecosystems. Presentations of these chapters under various sections, such as diversity, case studies, management, etc. could have aided to make the story of conservation of mangroves in India more apprehensible.

The book has an attractive layout with around 156 spectacular coloured photographs, that liven the articles and makes reading pleasant. Certainly, it is not just 'yet another book on mangrove', unquestionably valuable for anyone who is concerned with mangroves, may it be a decision maker or an alert citizen.

■ SWAPNA PRABHU

3. SYSTEMATIC NOTES ON ASIAN BIRDS 2010. Edited by David R. Wells, BOC Occasional Publications No 5. Published by the British Ornithologists' Club in association with the Trust for Oriental Ornithology, Eastbourne, UK. Size: 24.5 cm x 17 cm, 148 pp. Paperback. Price not mentioned.

In 2000, the Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum (Naturalis), Leiden, and the Trust for Oriental Ornithology (TOO) started a series known as *Systematic Notes on Asian Birds* (SNAB). Five issues appeared annually as a part of the journal *Zoologische Verhandelingen* and, after the merger of Leiden titles, a sixth issue was published in 2006 as part 5 of volume 80 of *Zoologische Mededelingen*. As Helen Baker, Chairman of British Ornithologists' Club (BOC), has written in her preface of this volume, the Leiden Museum terminated the agreement to publish the series, therefore BOC came forward and made an agreement with TOO to continue this series. Although the present issue has been published after a gap of four years, the numerical continuity of the papers in the series is maintained, and David Wells continues to be the editor.

The present volume has research papers on some of the most taxonomically difficult and challenging taxa of Asian birds, such as the babbler subfamily Pellorneinae of which there are five species under genus *Pellorneum* in South Asia. There are nine papers on the taxonomy of Asian birds and one Letter to the Editor. Admittedly, these papers, like earlier papers in this series, are quite esoteric and technical and may not be totally understood by a lay birdwatcher, but they are quite important for writers of field guides, and most importantly, extremely important for revision of the HANDBOOK

OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN by Sálím Ali and S. Dillon Ripley, which is long overdue.

As Editor David Wells has written in his Foreword, mainly six broad categories of papers were published in this series till now: 1) Preliminary reviews, 2) Types compilations, 3) Taxonomic revisions and realignments, 4) Nomenclatural revisions, 5) Bibliographic research, and 6) History of collectors and collections. The SNAB 2010 volume under review features five of these categories. It may not be possible to give details of each category here so readers are requested to read SNAB 2010.

Bird taxonomy is under great flux, particularly after the advent of molecular taxonomy. For example, in paper no. 68 of this series, Cibois *et al.* (2010) have shown that genus *Graminicola*, previously treated as Old World warblers, belongs to family Timaliidae (babbler). In another paper on leaf-warblers, genera *Phylloscopus* and *Seicercus*, Martens (2010) has reconfirmed that *Seicercus burkii* complex now comprises of eight species, mainly based on molecular genetics and vocalization. Earlier, papers (e.g. Martens *et al.* 1999, Alstrom and Olsson 1999, 2000) had proved that *S. burkii*, considered as one species, with many subspecies till then, is a highly complex group of golden-spectacled warblers and could comprise of 8-10 species. Two new species